



National Park Service

Lands Legacy Initiative

Open Space and Recreation Grants

The Lands Legacy Initiative provides opportunities for states and localities increase open space and recreational opportunities through the competitive matching grants under a new conservation grants program and a UPARR demonstration program. In addition, Lands Legacy encourages states to plan for acquisition by providing matching grants through Open Space Planning grants.

Open Space Planning Grants

Open space protection and land acquisition is gaining momentum at the regional and local levels as a means to protect farmland, maintain natural surroundings in communities, and combat sprawl. \$50 million is requested for a new competitive grant program to support the development or improvement of state or regional plans for open space preservation. The objective of this grant program is to ensure that land and open space conservation efforts are made with the best available information and coordinated with economic development, transportation, and other plans.

This program would provide competitive matching grants to states to support planning efforts that utilize state-of-the-art geographical tools and integrated approaches to conserve open space, recreational opportunity, farmland, wildlife habitat, cultural and natural assets, and to link these objectives to planned transportation, infrastructure, economic development, and population growth. Grant award criteria would be developed in consultation with state officials and the public, and would emphasize the utility of integrated landscape-level planning

approaches with participation from local, regional, and state governments.

The planning grants will be flexible enough to meet the needs of the individual states--whether that is for development or improvement a comprehensive state-wide plan or a regionally focused plan, a plan focusing exclusively on open space or one which combines open space planning with other planning efforts. For instance, the State of New York has developed an Open Space Conservation Plan that was authorized by the State Legislature and developed under the auspices of the State's Department of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. This plan outlines policy objectives for open space (farmland protection, wetland restoration, greenways) and specific open space priorities in the state that meet these policy objectives. The State encourages open space preservation through either state and local governments or land trusts.

The State of Washington, through their Growth Management Act, requires counties and, later, cities to develop comprehensive growth plans that include topics such as urban and rural land use, open space, transportation and facility siting. While the plans do not target specific properties or projects for open space acquisition, they do identify priorities.

Conservation Grants

In recent years, many states and localities have acted through bond issues and other means to acquire open space and protect farmland, wildlife habitat, and other important land values. In addition, the demand for outdoor recreational opportunities within access to urban and growing suburban areas is steadily climbing. \$150 million is requested for a revived Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program to help address the land acquisition needs of states and localities. This program would provide grants to states and localities to acquire lands and easements for urban parks, greenways,

Funding Request (\$ in thousands)

Open Space and Recreation Grants

Open Space Planning Grants	50,000
Conservation Grants	150,000
UPARR Grants	4,000

Total	204,000
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outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, and wetlands conservation. Grants would be awarded through a competitive process, with emphasis on acquisition projects in support of "smart growth" and open space plans. Criteria for grant awards will be developed in consultation with state and local officials and the public. The grants will require matching contributions from state and/or local sponsors.

This grant program recognizes the state and local efforts already being made, and seeks to leverage and encourage such efforts through the addition of competitive matching grants that can encourage and assist the best and highest priority state and local land conservation efforts throughout the nation.

Since the inception of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, of the approximately \$9 billion that has been appropriated from the LWCF, about \$3.25 billion has been awarded to

cities in the country because of the purchase of the 9000 acre Phoenix Mountain Preserve. This piece of open space was acquired over three decades, partly through the assistance of the LWCF.

- The Statue of Liberty is adjacent to Liberty State Park in New Jersey because of an almost \$8 million State-side LWCF grant. Creation of the park took pressure off the National Park Service to acquire and operate additional acreage in New York Harbor. Moreover, by converting junkyards and abandoned rail lines into greenery, the park has provided badly needed open space to crowded northern New Jersey.

The benefits of LWCF grants are numerous. They include: leveraging of non-federal dollars, stimulating coordination and public-private partnerships, and encouraging planning on the state and local level.

Urban Park and Recreation Recovery

funds and encouraged the identification of park and recreational needs through coordinated planning.

In the past, UPARR has achieved many notable successes, including:

- A UPARR grant successfully stimulated the formation of a city/community partnership that resulted in the dramatic renovation of historic Clay Square in the Irish Channel neighborhood of New Orleans.

- In San Antonio, TX, venerable Brackenridge Park was substantially rehabilitated and upgraded with the assistance of two UPARR grants. Unsightly and poorly designed roads and parking areas in a seven acre core along the San Antonio Riverfront were eliminated and replaced by a landscaped pedestrian mall. A stone bathhouse was converted into a playscape for children.

The UPARR Program was established to provide seed money for local

District of Columbia. In the past, through the State-side Land and Water Conservation Fund, some 2.3 million acres of land have been purchased and otherwise acquired. Here are some examples of projects funded by the State-side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund:

- An LWCF grant was the catalyst for the creation of Maine's world-renowned Allagash Wilderness Waterway, 23,000 acres of river woods and pristine wilderness famous for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, camping, and habitat preservation.

- Phoenix, AZ is one of the greenest

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) Program was created in 1978 to address cities' critical needs for parkland and recreation programming. Established to help rejuvenate urban areas, UPARR exists to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed metropolitan areas. UPARR awarded over 1200 grants from 1978 to 1995, although it has not been funded since 1995. The Lands Legacy Initiative proposes to reinstate funding for a UPARR demonstration program at \$4 million. In the past, UPARR has produced many benefits to communities because it stimulated coordination and partnerships by requiring matching

local financial assistance could not and should not rebuild all urban parks or solve all urban recreation problems. The UPARR concept rather was for a national program to encourage increased local commitments to protection and management of existing resources through grants that supported national competitions among cities and urban counties based on grant awards only for the best examples of urban recreational planning, management, redesign, and renovation by local governments. The UPARR Program under the Lands Legacy Initiative will continue this tradition on a modest scale.